

Press Release

**September 29, 2006**

**SCHAKOWSKY BLASTS GOP FOR UNWILLINGNESS TO HOLD MILITARY SECURITY CONTRACTORS ACCOUNTABLE**

**AMERICAN TAX DOLLARS ARE BEING USED TO FINANCE PRIVATE, UNACCOUNTABLE, MERCENARIES**

**WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, a Chief Deputy Whip, blasted the GOP for stripping her comprehensive military contractor oversight amendment from the FY 2007 Defense Authorization Act during conference consideration. The Schakowsky amendment would have developed the first-ever mechanism for Congressional oversight of U.S. taxpayer-funded mercenaries operating in Afghanistan and Iraq.**

"Now that we are more than three years into the Iraq war, this amendment would have given Members of Congress the tools we need to exercise our oversight responsibilities on what has become a major component of our military and to clarify the role of contractors," Schakowsky said. "Unfortunately, the Republican majority's strategy of cut-and-run from their oversight responsibilities continues."

"Private, for-profit military contractors do not share the same mission-based goals as the U.S. military. They are in business for profit. As the Iraq experience makes clear, a more transparent framework for monitoring contractors is urgently needed."

The Schakowsky amendment, which passed the House of Representatives on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006 by voice vote, would have required a DOD Inspector General report on contractor overcharges, established a background check system for foreign nationals hired by U.S. contractors, prevented contractors from hiring felons and human rights abusers and required sufficient contractor oversight officers to review contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**These commonsense and necessary provisions were removed from the Defense Authorization bill by Republican conferees behind closed doors. Private military contractors make up the second largest force in Iraq after the U.S. military.**